

Important Note: This activity was developed for the original Green Lunchroom Challenge program, a voluntary pledge program for K-12 schools to improve the sustainability of their food service operations. The project was coordinated by the [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center Technical Assistance Program](#) with funding from US EPA Region 5.



The following page(s) represent the content of this activity as it appeared on the original project web site, complete with available points and instructions for submitting documentation. **The project is no longer funded and as of June 2018 schools may no longer submit activity documentation to earn points and recognition as described.** The activity is presented for your information to guide your organization's sustainability efforts.

If your school or district implements the suggested activity and wishes to share its experiences, please email [Joy Scrogum](#). Your story may be incorporated into a blog post on this web site, the main ISTC site, or shared on social media to foster networking and inspiration among peer institutions.

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Establish an on-site compost pile

Activity Category: Composting

Activity: Establish an on-site compost pile


Rationale: According to a [study conducted](#) by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, close to fifty percent of school waste can be diverted through composting.

Onsite composting of food waste has multiple benefits. On site composting reduces the amount of waste your institution is required to send to a landfill; using the compost on the premises returns essential nutrients required for plant growth back to the soil. Additionally, well made compost prevents soil erosion and overall quality of local soil.

Activity Description: Create a dedicated space on premises that processes food scraps through composting. This may take the form of row composting, bin composting or even in-vessel composting. Use the finished compost for the maintenance of school property or in the school garden. If possible, involve students in the care and maintenance of the compost as part of classroom or club activities.

Earn Challenge Points (150 points): In order to earn points for this activity, write a brief description (1-3 pages) of the on-site compost pile, including when the pile was established (it must be after signing up for the Challenge to count), what type of compost pile it is, how much material is composted daily/weekly/monthly and what types of materials are accepted, what the finished compost will be used for, if students/staff/parents are involved and how. Email your description, along with 1-3 photos of your compost pile, to Joy Scrogum at jscrogum@illinois.edu. If possible, include images that show students and staff help build or maintain the compost pile.

Resources:

-  [Guide to Starting a School Composting Program in Your School](#)
-  [Cafeteria Composting in Schools](#)
-  [Starting a Compost Pile at School](#)
-  [Ideas for Student Research Projects Around Compost](#)
-  [Backyard Magic: The Composting Handbook](#)
-  [Schools Save \\$6,000 Annually By Composting](#)

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